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ARE WE AWAKENED?

TRUTHFULNESS is what nations, like individuals, need above all things. A nation that is truthful toward itself can weather any storm, outlive and overcome any crisis. Are we possessed of this quality to the degree required to secure our future?

On the 13th of July the *Chicago Herald*, commenting on the assassination of President Carnot, and anarchy in general in Europe, wrote: "Our healthful soil and atmosphere will not nourish it." Was the city, in whose records the anarchist trial fills a not unimportant page, the most appropriate place to pen these words? Was this the proper time to boast of "our healthful soil and atmosphere," when the atmosphere was thick with the smoke of hundreds of railroad cars burned by rioters,—when the soil of this same city resounded with the footfall of federal troops sent by the president, because these rioters and their backers made ruthless sport of the federal laws?

I cannot help thinking the time ill chosen for congratulating ourselves upon our healthfulness, for the more earnestly I have tried to grasp the situation, the more have I become convinced that we are fast drifting into a more appalling crisis even than the civil war. Secession was merely a political rebellion. Though a social institution was the primary and principal cause of the antagonism between South and North, and economical interests as well as moral convictions entered largely into the question,

the contention, as to its official form, was only a conflict of policy fought out in the panoply of legal right. In the civil war two geographical sections of the country were arrayed against each other on the basis of a constitutional question, with respect to which they held opposite views with equal honesty. The only question at issue was the purely political one of Union or non-Union. The abolition of slavery, though in the strict sense of the word necessary, was merely an incident to this political question, resorted to as a means to an end. Only in point of fact was a social and economical revolution included in the results of the war, and this revolution, though far reaching, was far from being radical, for the slaveholders constituted but a small part of the southern people. They certainly were politically, socially, economically the dominant element, but still they were not the social body. Slavery had more and more become the paramount formative force, but it had not supplanted and absorbed the other structural elements and principles of society. These had all the while continued to exist, in law and in fact, and the war left them wholly intact. Society, as historically evolved since the creation of man, came wholly unscathed out of the war so far as regards all its determining principles; nay it was even vastly strengthened, for the social and economical revolution consisted in making the application of these principles obligatory also as concerned those whom the law had thus far kept without the pale of them.

At present nothing less than the preservation of society is at issue. Nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand will not only deem this assertion extravagant, but dismiss it at once as a self-evident absurdity. Still it is as demonstrable a fact as any proposition of Euclid. If the vital principle is extinguished, death ensues. Will this assertion be controverted? The extinction of the vital principle of society, however, is the task organized labor is systematically working at, and a large majority of the people are more or less winking at it from lack of discernment, from fuddled sentimentalism, from self-absorbed indolence, or from moral nervelessness. Whoever says society, says law. Without law the mass of human beings inhabiting a certain area

is as destitute of the character of society as a pack of wolves roaming over the prairies. The more society develops with the advance of civilization, the more does law of necessity become its vital principle; though at the same time the domain of positive law will be and ought to be restricted to the extent warranted by the willingness and capability of public intelligence and conscience voluntarily to supplement the positive law by the first and foremost tenet of true liberty: that the freeman is bound by implicit moral obligation, also in the absence of legal restraint, not to trespass in the assertion of his rights upon the equal rights of others. The highest type of commonwealth conceivable to the human mind is that in which the rule of men is wholly supplanted by the government of law in the sense: (1) that no authority is possessed by the rulers except as organs of the law; (2) that all the members of the commonwealth are equally and absolutely subject to the law.

For more than a century it has been the proudest boast of the Americans that the United States is a commonwealth of this type. This is fast becoming a thing of the past, and will soon be entirely so, unless the people finally awake to the fact that organized labor is declaring a war to the knife upon the central principle of the government of law. Ever bolder does it unfurl the banner of anarchy, and the worst kind of anarchy—socialistic anarchy, under the guise of a government of law and under the protection of the law. It does so in perfect good faith—though some of the leaders may be and probably are conscious self-seeking demagogues of the lowest order—and just that constitutes the appalling danger. With unfeigned moral indignation it laughs to scorn, as a vile and nonsensical calumny, the accusation that it is striving to blast the very bedrock on which the social structure rests, and the unfeigned indignation incites it to redouble the efforts of its suicidal madness, to dig the mines deeper and charge them heavier. The people, however, look coolly on, or even cry encouragingly, “go it, go it!” until they are startled and scared by the explosion of some powder outside the mines. Then they pull themselves together, beat off the miscreants who

have mischievously trifled with the dangerous stuff, and sing a loud Hosannah to the glory of their sterling virtue and indomitable courage and energy.

The gravity of the last onset of organized labor is mostly—judging from the press I am tempted to say almost universally—conceived to lie in the riots, with all their attendant crimes, including arson and manslaughter in the first degree (or even murder?), while the president is “pointed to with pride” for having called out the troops against the rioters. Though undoubtedly of the gravest import in themselves considered, especially as a symptom, the disturbances have certainly been a blessing in disguise, if they have at last taught the people as well as “labor” that fire will burn—rather an old fact, but apparently quite forgotten by both, though for a long time not a year has passed without some impressive reminders of it. As to the latter—great God! has it come to this, that this nation of nearly seventy millions, “the last hope of mankind,” the nation which a generation ago fought to a successful end, the greatest civil war recorded in history thinks it has reason exultingly to congratulate itself and to proclaim with a deafening flourish of trumpets as a glorious feat, that its chief magistrate has had the nerve to put down a rebellious mob of a few thousands, too cowardly to face a single volley, to stand its ground against a single bayonet charge, to build a single barricade? Is not this in itself a most startling sign of the times? A man who knows that his house rests on firm ground and is built of solid materials never feels tempted to be jubilant over its having withstood a sharp gust of wind pelting it with hail for a minute or two. By indulging in loud demonstrations of joy over it, he proves that he is fearful of its standing on quicksand, and that thin glass has been put where good brick and strong planks ought to be. By thus extolling Grover Cleveland you insult him and yourselves, the whole American people. What right had you to deem it, for a single second, an open question whether the man whom an overwhelming majority of the people have for a second time made the nation’s chief, because he had the first

time proved himself a man of the right mettle, would abjectly cower before an incendiary mob which it has not taken ten pounds of powder and lead to subdue, or to doubt if he would dare to do his plain sworn duty under the constitution and the laws? Has the rottenness of our political life, in your opinion, reached such a degree as to necessitate the presumption that all the men in high offices will prove recreant to the trust they hold from the people, or even, like Governor Altgeld, will, under the guise of defending the constitutional rights of the states, become open abettors of criminal lawlessness? In the name of the great shades of the founders of the republic and those hundred thousands who sleep on the southern battlefields, let us not pillory ourselves before the whole world by raising a triumphant hue and cry over what passes as a matter of course in every country on the face of the earth. A fine state of things, indeed, in a government of law, if public opinion plumes itself upon the fact that there was, after all, back-bone enough in the public authorities and in the people ultimately to get the better of a mob, which showed fight only so long as it met with no resistance. Ay, the president, his cabinet officers, the judges, part of the minor public authorities, and—as regards the riots—most of the press, too, have done their duty. But that is what one ought to expect in a government of law. How about what one ought not to expect in a government of law? Is it not our duty as well as our interest rather to turn our eyes to this long and dismal story? Can we read this with any degree of candor without being steeped in humiliation and feeling like hiding our faces in shame and dismay?

It might even well be questioned, whether we have cause to look with unmixed satisfaction upon the course of those who were, from the first, irrevocably determined to uphold the majesty of the law at any price, and have ultimately vindicated it. They have not been guilty of dereliction of duty, but that their discretion has not been at fault is by no means so certain. Bonaparte said: "Shooting down one thousand at the right time is saving the lives of tens of thousands in the future." Though

his maxims are the last a democratic republic ought to adopt without due examination, history knows of few men of keener political judgment and a deeper knowledge of the workings of the dark sides of human nature. This opinion, based upon these factors, is borne out by the experiences of all nations and all times. Many influential newspapers have highly commended "the sublime patience and leniency" of the troops. The future will reveal whether this sublime patience and leniency have not in truth been cruelty to the deluded as well as a wrong to their victim—society. That the riots have ceased is far from being an irrefutable proof that the government and its organs have done the right thing. To the patience and leniency of the troops it is due that for days the riotous spirit spread like wild-fire and took stronger and stronger hold upon innumerable minds. Sooner or later we shall have to pay the penalty for this, and it will be no small one. If powder and lead had been made to speak when the actions of the duly forewarned rioters first called for that argument, the riotous spirit would have been so effectually quelled that it would probably not again have come to a head for a good number of years. As it is, the rioters have unquestionably been intimidated for the moment. But by making them and all organized labor believe for days together that the government was not in earnest after all, the tardy proof that they were mistaken, accompanied to the last by expressions of regret with an almost apologetic undertone, has incensed rather than intimidated those who were not themselves rioters, but who had—all their wordy protestations to the contrary notwithstanding—actually called the rioters on the stage and kept the doors wide open for them. They have been put in a frame of mind which renders it much more likely than it ever was before that on the next occasion they will themselves become rioters. Loudly professing to be law-abiding citizens and unqualifiedly to condemn all lawless violence, they still more loudly denounce the public authorities for vindicating the law in the only way in which it can be vindicated against incendiary and murderous rioters. From this denunciation there is but one step to arguing

with brick-bats, cudgels, pistols, muskets, and even cannon, if any can be procured. Even if there be nothing for us to learn from the experiences of "effete Europe," the history of our own country ought not to be lost upon us. It is replete with instructive illustrations of the dangers attendant upon a policy of easy-going procrastination in dealing with diseases of the body politic. If their character require the application of the knife, it is mercy as well as wisdom not to defer the using of it, and to cut the full depth at once whenever we resort to the knife. Statesmen who use the lancet where the surgeon's knife is needed bear a fearful resemblance to the man who chopped his dog's tail off by inches, because his kind heart restrained him from chopping it off at once at the desired length.

But however that may be, a very few minutes of honest reflection ought to convince every discerning man that the rioters and their crimes were the least alarming elements in the riots, considered as a symptom. Clergymen mounted the pulpit adorned with the badge of the strikers while ruthless lawlessness still had the upperhand;—not only the rioters, but also the non-rioting strikers made it ever more patent by their moves that nervelessness and open recreancy to duty on the part of public magistrates, and especially of several governors, during the late coal strike, were one of the main causes of the turn things had taken in this contention;—in a number of places state officials and municipal authorities did their very best to shield the lawbreakers and block the way of the legal avengers of the law;—the mayor of the metropolis of the interior found it necessary to administer a public official reminder, coupled with a threat of instantaneous dismissal, that the police are not paid for treating incendiary rioters to encouraging smiles;—a company of militiamen, by their flat refusal to ride in a train manned by non-union men, turned against the law they had been called out to defend;—it was publicly charged that stern threats by the general in command of the federal troops were required to make the mayor of the second city of the Union do his duty, and his demand that the officer give the lie to this base calumny, elicited an evasive

diplomatic reply which, by inference, looks more like a corroboration of the accusation than the denial asked for;—the federal Senate looked on for days ere it voiced the ever louder call of public opinion by formally endorsing the President's vindication of the law, and then the very senator who introduced the resolution, tried to tack a sweet sop for "labor" to it and thereby pour a pail-full of water into his glass-full of wine;—the House of Representatives held its peace until all was practically over, and, according to the *Nation*, only the rule requiring the reference of the fire-brand resolutions of the Populists to a committee saved us from incendiary speeches by our law-makers, and when at last a resolution endorsing the President's course was adopted, 27 votes were recorded against it;—and, to cap the climax, the governor of the great State of Illinois, in the face of the fact that savage anarchy was holding complete sway on many railroad tracks in Chicago and other places, dared twice to "protest" with emphasis against the President's doing his duty, as "unnecessary" and "unjustifiable," and to accuse officials of the federal judiciary of "political and selfish motives for wanting to ignore the state government," while his own impertinent epistles fairly bristled with patent untruths and demagogical perversions of the facts;—these are facts of infinitely greater and more awful import than the rebellious up-rising of some thousands of miscreants and their crimes. To compass their import we need, first of all, the moral courage to spurn the mendacious subterfuge of absolving the virtuous people of responsibility for the shortcomings of the men in office. If it were not so terribly serious a matter it would be unutterably ridiculous, this assigning to the sovereign people the part of the innocent babes in the wood enticed into all sorts of scrapes by the witchcraft of the politicians. These wily mischief makers evidently drop from the stars into their public positions and their power. If the sovereign people cannot help this, it must be in the nature of things, and if it be in the nature of things, what then is the use of being sovereign people? Popular sovereignty is in that case a dastardly practical joke, played by the people upon themselves, and the sooner they

go to Europe a-begging for some well-behaved prince out of employ the better for them. So long as the people have not the candor to confess to themselves that upon them rests the ultimate responsibility for all that is foul in our political life, and, consequently, also for all the evil influences exercised by what is foul in our political life upon our social conditions, we must go on drifting from bad to worse.

That is of course not saying that the wickedness of politicians is a myth, and that there is no need of guarding against their wiles. Governor Altgeld alone is in himself an invincible host to prevent us from falling into this mistake. Lack of space forbids any extensive examination of his two manifestoes. Nor is there any necessity for it, for nobody possessed of the slightest knowledge of the constitution and the laws, and not predetermined from political reasons to side with him, will concede that they can lay claim to the dignity of a constitutional argument. Besides, the case may rightfully be said to be too clear to admit of any argument. Art. I., Sec. 8, Cl. 3, and Art. I., Sec. 8, Cl. 7 of the constitution make the regulation of commerce among the several States, and the Post-office, federal affairs. Pursuant to these provisions of the constitution, Congress has enacted certain laws. The constitution enjoins upon the President to "take care that the laws be faithfully executed." Section 5298 of the Revised Statutes (Law of July 29, 1861) renders it "lawful" for the President "to employ such parts of the land and naval forces of the United States as *he* may deem necessary 'for this purpose if' not 'in the opinion of a governor,' but '*in the judgment of the President*,' . . . it shall become impracticable" . . . "by reason of unlawful obstructions, combinations, or assemblages of persons," . . . "to enforce, by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, the laws of the United States *within any State*." The following section (Law of April 20, 1871) makes it not only lawful for the President, but declares that "*it shall be his duty*" to employ "*in any State*" "the militia or the land and naval forces of the United States . . . or (by) other means, *as he may deem necessary*," "whenever any such insurrection,

violence, unlawful combination, or conspiracy, opposes or *obstructs* the laws of the United States, or the due execution thereof."

This language is too plain and comprehensive to leave room for doubt or cavil. Governor Altgeld has not a square inch of ground to stand on, unless he can prove the unconstitutionality of the two laws; and even then he would have no case against the President, for he is bound by them until they have been declared unconstitutional by competent judicial authority. But Governor Altgeld does not question their constitutionality. He knows that not a single judge can be found to sustain such an opinion, and he is keen enough to see that his end can be attained as effectually in a manner that appears perfectly innocent and plausible to those who, in such matters, cannot or will not think beyond their own noses. Nothing is easier than the virtual subversion of the whole constitution by means of professions of unfaltering and unqualified loyalty to it. The Governor simply sets up the claim that the execution of the federal laws within every state constitutionally depends on the tacit and, eventually, even the express permission of its chief executive officer. That is what his verbose reasoning amounts to. If it be correct, the American people have not only fought the civil war in vain, but the idea entertained by them for more than a century, that the adoption of the constitution was a glorious and most beneficial achievement, is a gross delusion. In that case their forefathers under the Articles of Confederation had a federal government worthier the name than we. At that time it was within the power of the *States* to determine whether and how far the legal will of the federal authority was to be allowed to be actually enforced; now this power would be lodged, for each State, with its *Governor*, and the power would be based upon a *constitutional right*. If the Governor *said* that he and the local authorities were willing and able to put down any unlawful opposition to the execution of the federal laws, the *facts* might give him ever so emphatically the lie—the federal government would be bound to remain a passive looker-on. Each one of forty-four men would thus, to a large

extent, hold the rights and the interests of the whole people of the United States on the tip of his tongue, for in a case like that in question successful opposition to the execution of the federal laws in one State has an intense effect upon the whole country. If this be the law, then indeed the question might be worth considering, whether we ought not to applaud and back those who are trying to make an end of the government of law in this country, for the terrors of downright anarchy would lead us back to a government of law of some kind, while this law would keep the gory sword of anarchy constantly suspended by a hair over our heads.

A day or two after the publication of Governor Altgeld's two letters to the President, a Chicago newspaper reported a high federal official from Illinois as saying: "Governor Altgeld is determined to make an ass of himself." As I do not wish to be suspected of standing sponsor to the language, I should, in spite of my hearty indorsement of the sentiment, refrain from the quotation, if I had not met with so many people, who, because of the very forcibleness of the language, were of the opinion that the letters might be dismissed with this criticism of ten words. Events soon made it fearfully apparent how serious an error of judgment this was. Nobody contests that even wood-chopping, hod-carrying and street-sweeping have to be learned. But in this country every male of the *genus homo*, above twenty-one years of age, claims to be a competent judge of the constitution and the laws (though he may never have read a single sentence of them), and by the right to vote he can make good this claim to a considerable extent. It is, therefore, a question of the gravest public concern extending far beyond the immediate issue and the boundary lines of the State, if in such times a governor makes "an ass of himself" on such questions. The President could not only do his duty despite the protests, but he also could and did silence the Governor by a few brief sentences that admitted of no answer. But he could not undo the mischief done by the letters, nor could Governor Altgeld himself, though he were ever so anxious to do so. "Labor" and labor's abettors, *in and*

out of Illinois, have repeated the protest against the employment of federal troops and, of course, referred to Governor Altgeld as a towering authority for the correctness of their opinion. They only find fault with him for not having gone far enough. A letter addressed to him by a meeting of the representatives of 350 labor unions says: "We insist that your excellency take legal steps to compel the withdrawal of said army forces at once." Even the circulation of petitions for the impeachment of the President and Attorney-General has been resolved. Many people unquestionably consider this rather a good joke—one of the humorous features in the serious affair. Ay, it surely is a broad farce, but with so strong a tragical element in it, that the day is certain to come, when we shall no longer feel like laughing over it. In the very monstrosity of the notion lies its danger, for in their ignorance and in their passion these people are fearfully capable of believing anything they wish to believe. It goes without saying that even the most hot-blooded and muddle-headed leader did not expect for a moment that anything could come of these petitions in Congress, though they should receive even more signatures than Debs and his adjutants predicted.¹ It is even pretty safe to assume that the leaders, knowing these predictions to be mere fustian, never intended to make an earnest effort in regard to the petitions. Nevertheless they exploded no blank cartridge. The demand for impeachment is but the most drastic formulation of the assertion that it is unconstitutional to employ the federal armed force for the execution of the federal laws, if it is organized labor that obstructs and prevents it. By putting the claim of immunity from the law into this form, the rank and file of organized labor can be more easily made to believe so implicitly in its justice that at the next clash it will be ready to go a long stride beyond what it has done now, provided the chances of success seem to warrant the venture. Does this generation remember so little of what the history of the slavery conflict teaches, how manifestly hereti-

¹ T. B. McGuire, Knight of Labor, expected "to get at least a half million signatures."

cal constitutional theories can be so deeply implanted into the thinking and feeling of the people that they become absolutely ineradicable, and with what a terrific energy they will ultimately assert themselves against all odds? Many a year lay between the first broaching of the doctrine of the right of secession and the possibility of its being carried out, but every year was a further step towards it, although this was often not apparent at the time.

"There is practically no revolutionary element in this country," says the *Chicago Herald* of July 17. "A study of the past should teach mere alarmists and sensation-mongers that their evil prophecies are destitute of both common sense and probability." Dozens upon dozens of influential papers echoed this sentiment in a hundred variations. Pray, gentlemen editors, go over the files of your predecessors in the editorial chairs in 1860, and even the first months of 1861. You will find them full to overflowing with even more emphatic assertions that secession did not rise to the dignity of a nightmare, and that the secession leaders were windbags and blusterers, almost too ridiculous for contempt; if, against all probability, they should dare to proceed from words to deeds, the sound masses of the Southern people would dispose of them quickly enough. "A study of the past" admonishes us to be distrustful of the infallibility of optimistic editors. I know that the only reply vouchsafed to this reminder will at the most be a derisive laugh. "The fanatics and pessimists have been exposed in their weakness," sings the same chorus *unisono* with the *St. Louis Republic*. "Labor has been taught a lesson it is sure never to forget. It is forever cured of any desire to face Uncle Sam, and it knows now that he will rise in all his might, whenever it touches the majesty of the law." Not to speak of the fact, that strikers, and miscreants enticed out of their dens by the strikers, have in several places continued to perpetrate the foulest crimes after the one volley fired by the federal troops in Chicago (which had indeed a very quieting effect there) I beg to call your attention, gentlemen, to the fact that your predecessors sang in the same

strain, when Andrew Jackson fulminated his Nullification Proclamation against South Carolina, and that Fort Sumter was nevertheless fired upon. Besides, with respect to the great and most encouraging teachableness you claim for "labor" apart from the lessons taught by Uncle Sam's bayonets and cartridges, how is it that after the Pittsburgh riots, the Martin Irons strike, and the little Homestead difficulty, we have now had the Debs strike and boycott? That throughout the land the people have been much more alarmed by this latest outbreak than by those former troubles, is undeniable. How is this to be accounted for, if "labor" has not taken a long stride forward in the wrong direction? It will hardly be asserted that the people have only grown more nervous. But if in spite of the lessons taught by those occurrences and on many other occasions which might be quoted, "labor" has now taken a long stride forward in the wrong direction, then what, in the name of "both common sense and probability," bars the assumption that ere long it will take another, and then still another stride forward in the same direction? It is asking rather much that, merely upon the strength of your *diximus*, we shall confidently abandon ourselves to the joyful expectation that henceforth it will ever march at double quick in the right path.

"You need not take any stock in our authority," rejoin our gleeful editors; "only give credit to the facts. Debs is buried under the ruins he has wrought, because 'labor' repudiated him. We do not predict that organized labor *will* be all right in the future, but the great bulk of it has proved by its disavowal of Debs that it *is* all right now."¹ Gentlemen, it is proved by your own papers that what you assert is not true. There was not a number published while the strike was in progress, which did not contain an abundance of irrefutable proof that exactly the opposite of what you now maintain to be the undeniable facts took place. If a single union or official leader of a union

¹ "The American Railway Union has been rebuffed and disowned no more by capital than by honest and intelligent labor. It is without recognition, without support, without sympathy, without friends."—*The Chicago Herald*.

has repudiated Debs in clear and unequivocal language as to the one essential thing, the *principle*, I have failed to notice it. Some declared from the start that under the circumstances—referring principally to the hard times—the movement was ill-advised, or that, for valid reasons of self-interest, they could not back him in the manner and to the extent he wanted them to. It is more than likely that the number of declarations to this purport would have increased steadily, and ultimately would have increased fast, even if Debs and Sovereign had not deeply offended the executive council of the American Federation of Labor by taking an important step without previous consultation with that body. But there is no question that this blunder greatly contributed towards the early and complete failure of the intended general strike. The same papers, which afterwards lauded Gompers to the skies for his level-headedness and loyalty, at first reported that his refusal to mobilize the army of the Federation of Labor was solely due to his wounded dignity and pride. They may have wronged him by this assertion, but his official refusal was explicitly and solely based upon reasons of expediency. Even his chagrin did not tempt him for a moment to join issue with Debs as to the principle.¹ The very white ravens among the labor leaders have not gone beyond holding their peace as to this. If there still be any among the leaders who hold sound opinions, they have no longer the courage of their convictions. The attitude of Gompers and all the rest has been practically iden-

¹ "In making this declaration (that the best interests of the unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor demand that they refrain from participating in any general or local strike which may be proposed in connection with the present railroad struggle) we do not wish it understood that we are in any way antagonistic to labor organizations now struggling for right or justice . . . we declare it to be the sense of this conference that a general strike *at this time is inexpedient*, unwise and contrary to the best interest of the working people. . . . The heart of labor everywhere throbs responsive to the manly purposes and sturdy struggle of the American Railway Union in its heroic endeavor to redress the wrongs of the Pullman employés. In this position they effectually reiterate the fundamental trade union principle, that working people, regardless of sex, creed, color, nationality, politics, or occupation, should have one and the same interest in one common cause for their own industrial and political advancement."—*Proclamation of the American Federation of Labor*, July 13.

tical with that of the trades unions of Bloomington, Illinois, who resolved, "That we condemn the action of these brotherhoods (of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen) for their lack of interest in this struggle, and that by their refusal to help the American Railway Union they have proved themselves as treacherous to the aims of organized labor." A vast number of unions have made a frank profession of faith and those which have spoken, have—to the best of my knowledge—one and all implicitly endorsed the principle contended for by Debs and his organization.

Everything, however, depends on the attitude of "labor" and the rest of the people towards the principle. If the principle be vicious and go on taking firmer hold upon the minds of people, the failure of any specific attempt of "labor" to accomplish a sweeping application of it furnishes but small cause for exultation. The catastrophe has been deferred, but not obviated; it has become more certain than before that it will ultimately come. The boastful pæans and the sweet lullabies of the genuine and of the feigned optimists sing public opinion into a false security, and consequently into indolence and inertness, while on the one side the aggressive force increases and on the other the power of resistance diminishes. The effects of this must become manifest when the circumstances become more favorable to the realization of the principle. In the nature of things such times must come. That "labor" will improve the opportunities is a matter of course, otherwise it could no longer hold to the principle. The question with "labor" can not be *whether*, but only *when* it shall make another onset—wholly a question of expediency.

To get at the true character and import of the problem confronting us, our principal task, therefore, is to examine the nature and scope of the principle contended for by Debs with the hearty endorsement of practically the whole of organized labor. Until a definite, clear, and correct answer is given to this question, all discussion of the late strike is necessarily more or less random talk.

The *Chicago Herald* writes: "There is no danger of revolution in the principles, plans and cohesive power of organized

labor." If this is so, the Debs strike was only a little purifying thunderstorm, and we can say, let us eat, drink, and be merry. Like everybody else I should be most glad if the *Herald* were right, but to me it seems as clear as the sun at noonday that the very opposite is the truth—the patent fact. I maintain that the principle, upon which organized labor has taken its stand squarely and firmly in the late strike, not only tends towards revolution, but *is* revolution—radical revolution in permanence. I can adduce the authority of Debs. He said on the 15th of July: "This is not a strike. This is an evolutionary revolution. . . . What we are fighting for is not a matter for only today, nor only for tomorrow, but for all time." But I prefer to give my own proofs for my assertion, or rather to let it be proved by the facts.

The Pullman employés, being refused an increase of wages, quit work. Mr. Debs, President of the American Railway Union, took up their cause, though, from prudential reasons, he had counseled them not to strike. Though the strikers did not belong to his organization and his organization stood in no business relation with the Pullman company, he demanded that the company have the case arbitrated. Mr. Pullman declined to do so, declaring that there was nothing to arbitrate, for there was no dispute about any previous agreement, and the question, what wages shall be paid, is no subject for arbitration. Upon this refusal Debs boycotted the Pullman cars. The railroad companies, cited the fact that they were by contract bound to use the Pullman cars, and declined to respect the boycott. Thereupon Debs tried to tie up the railroads by a strike. Under pretexts which had no connection whatever with the Pullman question, strike and tie-up were extended to roads not using Pullman cars. When the interposition of the Federal, State, and local authorities began to loosen his grip upon the roads, he urged all other unions to come to his assistance by a general strike. The unions, as we have seen, expressed their approval of what he had done, as well as of the principle around which he called upon them to rally, and treated it entirely as a question of expediency, whether

they should in this instance act in accordance with this principle.¹

These are, in brief, all the facts having any bearing upon the question of principle. Whether Mr. Pullman is a noble-minded philanthropist or a hard-hearted money scraper—whether Pullman is a “model town,” or based upon what is not only an un-American, but a thoroughly vicious principle (I am and always was decidedly of the latter opinion)—whether the railroad companies are “bloated corporations” deserving the execration of the public, or whether their managers and the stockholders are of the same make-up as other business people, “labor” included—all this, though of interest and in part even of considerable importance, is utterly irrelevant to the all-overshadowing question of principle.

Now let us take up these relevant facts, one by one in their chronological order, and see what the principle involved in them is.

The Pullman employes exercise their uncontested legal and moral right not to work for wages unsatisfactory to them. A labor organization, in no way concerned in the case and knowing nothing of it except what the one party is pleased to tell it, claims as its right and deems it its moral duty to ride into the lists with armor buckled on and sword drawn, solely on the strength of the fact that “labor” is contending against capital. It thereby proclaims that partisanship is imperatively imposed upon “labor.” It acts upon the maxim: right or wrong, “labor” must go with “labor.” Starting from this maxim it advances, step by step, to the other maxim: in contests between “labor” and capital,

¹ Though they were in the main agreed, there were many shades of opinion, and the differences were great enough to be of importance. A Chicago plumber is reported to have said: “We are divided on this strike proposition. In the first place we do not indorse the idea of striking at this time, but as union men we will go out provided the strike is made effective and general. What we want to see is some satisfactory evidence that a general strike can be made possible and that it will take place.” Some did not go quite to that length and others went considerably further. The plumber, I think, characterized pretty correctly the attitude of the great majority. On the 9th of July the representatives of 350 labor unions in Chicago voted for a general strike, under certain conditions.

"labor" is enjoined from admitting that "labor" can be wrong, or that capital can be right. This alone involves a radical revolution, for the fundamental economic fact of society as historically evolved is that capital and labor are not separate and distinct entities, but integral, thoroughly interdependent and inseparably inter-grown parts of an organic whole. Capital is past labor stored up; the laborers too are capitalists; in the creation of capital brain-work goes for even more than the mere muscle work; and labor insists, as much as capital upon the recognition of this fact, for skilled labor demands and commands higher wages than unskilled labor. By arraying labor in this manner against capital, labor, therefore, also arrays itself against itself. Whether labor gets a due share of the wealth it is creating jointly with capital, is of course a disputable question. A correct answer to this question can, however, only be found by a thorough examination of all the pertinent facts in every individual case. By laying down the principle that labor must side with labor, labor virtually denies this, and, by denying it, substitutes war for equity and, ultimately, might for right. The declaration of the American Federation of Labor, which put our optimistic editors in such high spirits by reproving Debs for being too "impulsive," contains at best a thinly-veiled avowal of this position. Capital is told, as plainly as can be done in an indirect way, that it holds its rights merely on sufferance, and that only because labor can for the present not help allowing it thus much.¹ "Labor's" thinking as to this question is vitiated to the core. In perfect good faith it believes that in its struggle with capital it has only rights and is bound by no duties.

¹ "The trades union movement . . . stands as the protector of those . . . who by their efforts contribute toward securing the unity and *solidarity* of labor's forces, so that in the ever present contest of the wealth producers to conquer their rights from the wealth absorbers," etc. Solidarity of labor in the ever present contest, and employing capitalists simply wealth absorbers—what does that mean if not what is asserted in the text? If we could sweep all capital from the face of the earth for only forty-eight hours, "labor" would get a correcter notion of the nature and the functions of capital. Having to recommence where Adam and Eve had to begin when they were driven out of paradise, it would ask itself, ere the sun went down for the first time, whether the infatuation, with which it claimed to be the sole producer of wealth, was more astounding for its arrogance or its stupidity.

"Labor" has revived the "*car tel est mon plaisir*" with which the Bourbon kings of divine right enacted their laws. It is as thoroughly convinced of its incontestable right to act upon this maxim of unrestrained absolutism, it does act upon it as arrogantly and more recklessly, and, in acting upon it, loses sight, more and more, of the fact that it is an integral and organic part of society and therefore cannot strike at society without smiting itself.

I shall be asked how my assertions tally with the fact that Debs asked for arbitration. People who allow greater weight to captivating words—"labor" has a great genius for effectively using and even for inventing such words—than to facts and acts, and to the form than the essence, naturally see an incompatibility here. Other people will have no difficulty in appreciating that the call for arbitration was from first to last the application of the above-mentioned principles. Debs did not request, he demanded arbitration. It was an order, backed from the first by an implied, if not an expressed, threat. According to the law of the land, it is entirely optional with the parties to a dispute, of this or any other kind, to settle it by arbitration or not. "Labor" does not recognize this legal right of capital. It says: If I want you to, you must, and I shall want you to whenever any part of "labor" wishes it in regard to the capital it has to deal with. Does "labor" propose to reciprocate and renounce its legal right of free option, whenever capital demands arbitration? When the President's intention was announced to appoint an investigating commission under the law of 1888, and many people mistook this for the appointment of a board of arbitration, the daily papers were at pains to ascertain the opinions of the "labor" leaders. Read their answers and you will find no doubtful answer to the question. Though they claimed the President's promise as a great victory to their cause, they said that before putting any faith in the commission they should have to wait and see what persons would be appointed; they spurned as unjustifiable and ridiculous the alleged demand of the President that the strike be declared off before the appoint-

ment of the commission, and frankly declared that, as a matter of course, "labor" would not consider itself bound to submit to any decision of the arbitrators unsatisfactory to "labor." The latter position was thoroughly sound sense. "Compulsory arbitration is nonsense on its face, for it is a contradiction in terms. If the parties to the dispute are not bound to abide by the decision, compulsory arbitration is a farce, and will often prove to be a most mischievous one. If they are bound to abide by it—legally bound, not only in honor, as in voluntary arbitration—then compulsory arbitration is only a misnomer for adjudication, and adjudication in regard to wages, hours of work, etc., whenever a disagreement between employ  s and employer arises and either of them asks for it; it is the annihilation of liberty and individualism throughout the whole range of economic life; it is the consummation of the rankest socialism, with all the possibly redeeming features of socialism left out—socialism without organization, and arbitrary power, *i. e.* anarchy, as the fly-wheel to keep the machinery in motion. "Labor" stands squarely on the sound doctrine, so far as it is to its advantage, and it absolutely repudiates it, so far as it is to the advantage of capital. In the latter case it claims as its incontestable legal and moral right the power to set aside and override the law of the land. Unable to deprive capital of its legal right by the action of the legal authorities, it claims an incontestable legal and moral right to do so by *voies de fait*—by the assertion of its might, by compelling the recalcitrant capitalists through compulsion of other capitalists, who have avowedly nothing whatever to do with the dispute, but whom it can harm and who are supposed to be able to harm the recalcitrants, by waging a most relentless, most disastrous, and most barbarous war, not only upon all capital, but upon the people at large, upon society as such. Now, the test of a sound rule is that it works both ways. If, however, that part of the people which is not "labor"—though it *work* as much and even more than "labor"—were to adopt the same line of action toward "labor," every labor controversy would evidently inaugurate the *bellum omnium contra omnes*.

To my knowledge, the whole history of mankind does not furnish a more drastic and more ruthless illustration of the Jesuitical maxim that the end justifies the means, than do these claims of "labor." Nor does "labor" set them up "in the abstract" as a "colorless theory" merely. It has acted out the mad doctrine to its last logical consequences, and it proclaims in trumpet tones, *urbi et orbi*, that it will never miss an opportunity to do so again, until it has attained its ultimate end, "labor"—not the people, but labor in quotation marks—ruling the country as sovereign lord and master.

The American Railway Union (which has nothing to do with the Pullman strike except as an arrogant intruder) orders the railroads (which have nothing to do either with the Pullman strike or with Mr. Pullman as the controlling power over the Pullman workshops) to punish Mr. Pullman for refusing to do, what he has a legal right to refuse. The railroads, on refusing to act as henchmen and executioners for "labor," are promptly visited with condign punishment; no other ground being assigned, for their striking employés did not even allege that they were prompted by any grievances of their own. The nineteenth century has often been called the century of inventions. In the judgment of posterity its most astounding invention will surely be this new kind of vicarious punishment. "How so," say Debs and Sovereign. "The railroads, 'taking up the cudgels' for their brother capitalists, have chosen to punish themselves; our law-abiding men have simply ceased working for them." Friends, that is the theory. But how about the facts? Why did you repeatedly call the strike a "tie-up"? Why did you, Mr. Debs, telegraph to Cincinnati: "Hold Big Four road. They cannot settle until all settle"?¹ And to Livingston, Montana:

¹ At this writing I can allow no weight whatever to the seemingly sweeping denial of Debs and his associates by their attorneys as to all the telegrams produced in court with one the exception. At the first reading, I asked myself whether one of the great surprises promised the public by Debs, according to the reporters, was to be the revelation that the incriminating telegrams were forgeries perpetrated by the General Managers, or by Judge Grosscup, or by President Cleveland. This would seem to be the readiest explanation of the sentence: "The defendants deny that any of the tele-

"Not a wheel shall turn until the whole railroad trouble is settled"? True, you have repeatedly assured your followers: "Not scabs in world to fill vacancies," *provided* your prediction was fulfilled: "The employés of all railroads will stand together." But you surely would not stoop to the level of Governor Altgeld and stultify yourself by asserting that, so far as the strike had proceeded, the wheels did not turn because the railroads could find no men to take the places of those who had gone out. Why did you telegraph to H. E. Sarber, Garrett, Ind.: "The Baltimore and Ohio officials are . . . looking for scabs in the eastern cities. By all means have them shut off"? Small wonder that some of your own followers did not scruple to commit a forgery at your own expense by unauthorizedly attaching the name of the revered leader to the order "That all men continuing in the employ of the railroad departments 'of the Stockyards, etc.,' will be forever branded as scabs and *treated as such.*" Small wonder, I say, for that you thought as they did, is proved by your telegram to Clinton, Iowa: "Stand pat. None will return to work until all on every (?) return. If they do they are scabs *and will be treated as such.*" What is the treatment scabs receive at the hands of your law-abiding men? Let the question be answered by the stories of Mrs. Lehmann and Mr. Vardaman; let it be answered by the following paragraph in the *Chicago Herald* (July 19)—which can discover nothing revolutionary in the principles of organized labor: "A reign of terror has been established [in

grams set forth in said information was sent or caused to be sent by them or any of them, or that they authorized or approved the same or any one thereof." Upon closer examination, it struck me that the words in a subsequent paragraph, which I shall italicize, may possibly indicate that the denial is not intended to be quite so sweeping as it is made to appear. "They deny that any other telegrams similar in form and character to those in said information were sent by Debs, or any of the defendants, *with the knowledge, authority, or approval of any of said other defendants.*" If stress is to be laid upon the italicized words, the quibble is as thin as the whole denial in regard to the "*ordering*" of strikes. That some quibble, if not something worse, is at the bottom of the denial, surely admits of no doubt. Debs will as easily persuade the people that the whole strike was but a bad dream, as he will make them believe that he and his associates had really nothing whatever to do with the telegrams and only learned of their existence from "the information."

the Stockyards] by the frantic railroaders who are still on strike. Engineers and firemen are beaten and pelted on their way to work. Each of the men now in the cabs has been warned by committees that he is doomed. At sunset the crews are escorted home by police details or are housed in near-by restaurants and hotels." Verily, they must have double locks to their eyelids, who do not see your brazen faces through your hypocritical masks. The very word "scab" is an infamous outrage upon liberty and equality of rights. Organized labor "shutting off" scabs is the most high-handed usurper, the most hard-hearted despot, the deadliest enemy of liberty the world has ever seen. The worst it has ever been guilty of against capital is a petty offence compared with what it perpetrates upon labor, without quotation marks, in almost every big strike. And the whole people are its accomplice by having let it come to this. But the guilt of a large proportion of the people extends much further. Is it not the rule rather than the exception that we go on simply shrugging our shoulders over it, as an evil which has just to be borne? And how many have for the "scabs" at the most a cold "*à la guerre comme à la guerre*," or even openly side with "labor" against them! Well, they will have to pay their full share of the bill, which is sure to be presented to us in due time for our sins of omission as a nation in this respect. We are sadly mistaken if we think, or act as if we thought, that we, in this land of liberty and equal rights, can with impunity allow that right to be trampled in the dust which is of older date, more fundamental, holier, and more important than any other right—the right to work without let or hindrance.

"*À la guerre comme à la guerre*." Exactly. That is the very simple but most comprehensive doctrine of "labor," extended indiscriminately to all. On the second of July, Debs telegraphed to South Butte, Montana: "If strike is not settled within forty-eight hours, complete paralysis will follow." Because Mr. Pullman chooses to exercise his legal right and the railroads will not be compelled to force him out of it, "labor" arrogates to itself the right to inflict "complete paralysis" upon the country. Yet we

are told in the categorical tone of unchallengeable authority that there is nothing revolutionary in the principles or plans of organized labor. The effect of tying up all the railroads, however, is necessarily complete paralysis, for they have become the arteries through which the life-blood of society—by no means only of its economic life—courses, and Debs announced his intention to go to that length. He is reported to have said on the thirteenth of July: "We shall tie up every railroad in the United States so tight that not a train can move. We can do it and will do it." Then he added, after expatiating upon his regret over the "injury" that would thereby be done to "innocent and well-disposed persons" and declaring that "we have been influenced solely by the well-being of the public and the welfare of the nation": "The public need not come to us with supplications, for we shall not hear them." Gracious God! Society is to be henceforth at the mercy of every employer daring to exercise his legal right of refusing arbitration, for "labor" will then, if it see fit, exercise its legal right in conformity with its moral duty and completely paralyze society, even unto starvation and, what is infinitely worse, unto all the mental and moral horrors attendant upon complete paralization. If this be not waging war upon society and breaking down its very basis, what then is? Let us consign the phrase "Bedlam let loose" to the obsolete figures of speech; we have now a much stronger and therefore more appropriate one, "labor" let loose. Is this an exaggeration? Let Debs and his associates be judged out of their own mouths. "The strike, small and comparatively unimportant in its inception, has extended in every direction, until now it involves or threatens, not only *every public interest*, but the *peace, security, and prosperity of our common country*. The contest has waged fiercely. It has extended far beyond the limits of interests originally involved and has laid hold of a vast number of industries and enterprises *in no wise responsible for the differences and disagreements that led to the trouble*. *Factory, mill, mine, and shop have been silenced. Widespread demoralization has sway. The interests of multiplied thousands of innocent people are suffering. The common*

welfare is seriously menaced. The public peace and tranquillity are in peril. Grave apprehension of the future prevails." Thus wrote Debs, Howard, and Keliher to the General Managers.

"Oh," protest the optimistic editors, "Debs is not Labor." Was this awful condition of things not brought about by "Labor" following the lead of Debs? As to that part of "labor" which had not been directly instrumental in bringing about this awful condition of things, I have only to repeat: "labor" has fully endorsed the principle on which Debs has taken his stand, and declared it wholly a question of expediency how far it ought to be acted out. "Labor" is fighting the trusts and, in my opinion, justly so. But by professing the Debs principle—and, for that matter, materializing it even today to an appalling extent—it has erected itself into the vastest and most mischievous trust conceivable. It is, in principle, solidarily arrayed not only against capital, but against society. Not only capital, but also society holds its rights only on sufferance. For how long yet? Until "labor" is strong enough to carry out the idea of a general strike and its passion is so aroused that it concludes the moment has come to give full vent to its suicidal madness. To do so, it need not resort to riots. Judge Grosscup's charge to the grand jury has taught it what it may not do, if it does not want to come into conflict with the federal government. It will profit by the lesson and will avoid the mistakes next time which it has made now. It is by no means an insolvable problem technically to observe the laws and virtually to make mince meat of them.

It has been said times out of number in the course of the strike that "labor" was erecting itself into a state within the state. That is most true, but very far from being the whole truth. Debs and his whole following have asserted that the president, by sending federal troops for the enforcement of the federal laws, made the federal government fight the battle of capital against "labor" engaged in a legitimate and lawful strike. Nor did the judiciary escape the same accusation anent its injunctions. To erect a barrier against its barefaced partizanship, it was declared necessary to have the federal judges elected for stated terms in

order to bring them under "the control of the people," whose "servants" they are. The American Federation of Labor, with the level-headed and loyal Gompers at its head, asserted: "*All the civil and military machinery of the law have rallied on the summons of the corporations.*" By these denunciations "labor" eliminates the government altogether, to the extent it (labor) sees fit to enter upon a trial of strength with capital. It *substitutes* "labor" for government. There is no authority having either a legal or moral right to interfere with *Labor militants*, though it strike the country with complete paralysis. And during the campaign "labor" has rights which neither the federal government nor the state government have at any time.

Federal and state government have the right of taxation, but it is admitted by statesmen and authorities on constitutional law that they are not authorized, in the exercise of this right, to go to the extent of virtual confiscation. "Labor's" right of taxation is not thus restricted. Though it taxes in such a way that the taxes do not inure to its own benefit or to the benefit of any one else, the people are as really taxed by the clogging of all the wheels of business as by any direct or indirect taxes ever levied by any government. For this view we have the good authority of the *Chicago Herald*. On the same page on which it so summarily disposed of the bugaboo of revolutionary elements, it also told its readers, editorially: "The strike bosses are now no better than anarchists. They publicly avow an intention to induce thousands of men to engage in passive destruction of property. It makes no difference to the shippers of the West and South whether rioters break open cars with axes and destroy fruits and vegetables, or whether strikers side-track the cars and let the property be destroyed by age and heat. The loss is as heavy no matter which the mode of destruction." So it is. The form does not make the slightest difference, and as "labor" has the right to enact a "complete paralysis," and to keep its decree in force as long as it pleases, it has the right to bankrupt every one who can be bankrupted by setting the economic life of the nation at a standstill. What does it avail us against "labor" that the

constitution commands: "No person shall be deprived of property without due process of law"? Besides, federal taxes must be uniform throughout the United States. "Labor" has unlimited discretion in this respect. It is perfectly free to discriminate as much as it pleases between sections, states, localities and kinds of business.

The Federal government and the State governments must respect the humblest citizen's right of free locomotion. "Labor" has the right to deprive the whole people of it, so far as locomotion depends on the modern means of communication.

In the interest of the public the law imposes duties upon common carriers. "Labor" has the right to render the fulfillment of these duties impossible.

It is the duty of the federal government to provide a mail service for the people. It is the right of "labor" to deprive them of it.

The constitution says: "Cruel and unusual punishments" shall not be inflicted. "Labor" has the right to inflict such punishments though the persons be not criminals at all, but avowedly "innocent and well-disposed," and it exercises the right in innumerable cases, by depriving the people of the mail service and of the right of locomotion. Or is it not "cruel and unusual punishment" to keep men, women, and children in a burning sun on the prairie for many hours without food or drink, or to prevent the son from receiving the father's last blessing, the mother from hurrying to the bed of her dying child? Nor are whole communities secure against being visited with "cruel and unusual punishments" by labor in the exercise of its legal and moral right of "passive destruction" in a hundred forms. Debs II. or Debs III. may not be so humane as Debs I. If a future mayor of Chicago approaches their throne with the humble request to allow a railroad car to be moved to get the carrion out of the city, they may not, like Debs I., grant this prayer, but take for their model Debs I. announcing that he will not listen to "supplications" from the people, and the July sun of 1900 or 1910 may be allowed every chance to breed pestilence out of the accumulating carcasses.

This list could be easily prolonged. But has not enough been said already to warrant the question: What are the rights of society which "labor" is bound to respect?

Ah, "complete paralysis" is a terrible thing in these times of ours, when every hour throbs with more life than a whole year did a century ago. More than dollars are involved in it; and truly appalling is the thought that the only protecting shield of the people against the calamity is to be the hope that their "supplications" will after all receive a gracious hearing ere it has come to the worst.

Verily it is time to cry halt! for what "labor" does is nothing less than the setting up of the claim, that it has the legal and moral right at any time it pleases, and for any alleged grievance of any part of it, *solidarily* to act as *hostis generis humani*. Yes, as the enemy of civilized humankind, itself included, nay itself first and foremost, for though it is *not* without the pale of possibility that it will triumph for a while, it will itself suffer the most, and the more it triumphs, the greater the self-inflicted punishment will be. More completely it cannot triumph than the radicals did in France just a century ago. Yet their every victory was a step further towards their doom, and brought greater calamities upon the new aristocracy of *sansculottes*, for which and with which they fought. This will and must be the fate of "labor," if it go on traveling on the lines on which it is moving now. "Labor" may be stronger than capital, and for a while even stronger than society, but it is and must ever remain weaker than the nature of things.

I know full well what treatment I have to expect for this frank profession of faith at the hands of "labor" and optimistic editors. The kindest will say or think that as a raving maniac I am only a fit object for contemptuous pity. Then I would remind of Rousseau's word, quoted by Camille Desmoulins against Robespierre: "To burn is not to prove." Others, while admitting that there is some truth in my reasoning, will ask: Has labor no just grievances? Does capital not abuse its power? Can labor better its hard lot to the extent required not only by labor's interest, but by the interest of society, unless labor

organizes for the purpose of exercising a joint pressure? To these I reply: Is there a single sentence in this article proving that there is any disagreement between us on any of these heads? Am I to be branded as an enemy of my suffering brother, because I object to his trying, upon the advice of a hundred quacks, to relieve his own pain with vitriol and prussic acid, and to cram them, as "safe-cure" drugs down the throat of every member of the family? "Ah, well," I will be told, "what is your remedy?" I answer: Excuse me. This article was not written to propose a cure, but to give a diagnosis of the disease, and this only from one point of view. But I have no objection to confessing that I do not believe myself in possession of an infallible arcanum. If my diagnosis be right, it is self-evident that no such thing can exist. I am of opinion that something can be attained by legislation, and I think that our legislators can find some valuable suggestions in the "Observations" of the Duke of Devonshire, supplementary to the report of the Royal Commission on Labor.¹ But I am perfectly sure not only that there is no nostrum, but also that anything palmed off as a nostrum upon "labor" or society, must do more to aggravate than to cure the evil. The roots are too manifold and lie too deep, and many of them cannot be reached at all by legislation. It is an extremely crude notion to suppose that they all spring directly from economic facts and relations. There is no side of our inner or outer life that does not in some way stand in a genetic

¹ Above all I think that there is something in the idea of giving the labor organizations, by positive law, much more extensive rights than they enjoy at present, but corresponding legal responsibilities should be attached to the right. They will probably become more wary in ordering strikes or boycotts, if they have jointly to pay the penalty for any trespass or damage done by illegal acts of any of their members, committed in consequence of a strike or boycott ordered by them. The way in which Debs and his associates now try to elude the grasp of the avenging law by blandly alleging that they never had or exercised any authority, but merely expressed opinions, very clearly proves that the labor leaders are reckless, to the point of ruthlessness, in the use of their tremendous power, primarily because they have become satisfied by experience that they can, practically, no more be brought to account for what they do, than the autocrat of Russia can. The question as to what can be done by law to restrict the possibility of irresponsible power, is certainly one of the most important chapters of the social problem.

connection with them. Whatever is unsound and vitiated in our political life, in our pedagogics in the home and the school, in our family life, in our social customs, in our press and other literature, in our whole thinking and feeling as a nation, as society, as individuals—all is either an originating cause or at least furnishes aliment to the myriad of sucking roots. We must go back to human nature and the nature of things to get at the ultimate causes.

This is evidently the last conceivable evolutionary phase of the "alarmist." If these assertions be true, the disease is manifestly incurable. So it most surely is. The circle will be squared sooner than the social problem will be solved, for it is co-existent and co-extensive with society. Only its forms change; to search for its *solution* is to search for the philosopher's stone; searching for the philosopher's stone, however, while leading to much useful knowledge, has also wrought a great deal of harm. We cannot reach the goal. Our task is to press on toward it. In regard to the question in hand our advance must proceed by systematically directing our efforts towards changing the form of the social problem in such a way that it presents a more refined and higher evolutionary phase than before. This we cannot accomplish by merely working directly at it. We must, besides, at the same time, contend as systematically and with equal energy against all the remoter and indirect causes of the evil. This complicates the task and renders it more difficult; but on the other hand it is just this that can and, I honestly trust, will and does, secure our salvation. Whoever works with good discernment and earnest devotion toward our betterment—collectively or individually—in any one respect, is also an effective worker upon the social problem, and those who are engaged in this work count by hundreds of thousands. But let them beware lest they undo directly with their left hand what they do indirectly with their right. Whatever the field on which they work as reformers, they must know that the prerequisite of every genuine reform is to thoroughly know the nature of the evil to be contended against. Therefore let them hold up the hands of those who

dare to probe to the bottom the deep wound from which such an awful quantity of putrid matter has flown in July, 1894; but let them beware of the vast crowd of those lovable but dangerous people who, as to this question, are possessed of a ton of vague and hazy sentiment to every ounce of clear thinking, and let them frown down those who think they serve the country best by covering up the wound with a neat scented cloth. For aught I know they may be the best of patriots, as regards their intentions, but they act as if they were the country's sworn enemies, when they cry with the *St. Louis Republic*: "Turn the wheels, work for the highest production, buy, sell, and invest. We have passed through what was worse than we feared. . . . We are stronger than we thought we were. What is now to prevent confidence and a hearty co-operation in restoring prosperity? . . . The American people are all right. Trust them and dash in with redoubled hope and energy."

Ay, I too trust the American people, but I trust them because I am confident that they will *not* say "we are all right," but will have the moral courage to face the facts, and thereby render it possible to bring all their mental and moral energies to bear not upon some thousands of rioters, but upon the real problem confronting them. It is so complicated, difficult and vast that, great as those energies are, there are none to spare. Fearful is the responsibility that rests upon this people, not only for themselves and for their posterity, but for all mankind. Never before have all the conditions been so favorable for making self-government a permanent success; never again can they be so favorable. If we fail now, after what those who have preceded us have achieved and left us as a priceless heritage, we shall stand in history more deeply branded than any other people, for our guilt will be greater than that of any nation that has ever trod the face of the earth.

H. VON HOLST.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO,
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